

camera to a tree and focusing for a close range picture on a nest bulging with young Robins, I noticed them disgorging cherry stones, one of which dropped on the side of the nest, and rolled back inside. The parent birds almost universally remove all excrement from the nest, but it was evident that they did not trouble themselves about removing the clean cherry stones, and on examination of several nests of the Robin, Wood Robin, and Catbird, I found as usual that they each contained from ten to fifteen stones, but, as I had never specially noted before, were perfectly clean, and must have been disgorged in all cases.

I concluded, therefore, that nature has only provided the small bird with this means of getting rid of the stone, which is too large to pass beyond the cavity of the stomach. I only wonder that I never thought of it before, for during cherry season, in nearly every old nest, at least of the varieties mentioned, will be found a clean little pile of cherry stones.—WM. L. BAILY, *Ardmore, Pa.*

**Birds' Tongues in Pictures.**—During this spring I have had especial opportunity to study song birds (Vireos, Warblers, House Wren, Catbird, Sparrows, Grackles, Orioles),<sup>1</sup> and one point of interest which I have determined to my satisfaction is that from a distance of a few feet, with a strong opera glass, a bird's tongue *cannot* be seen between the open mandibles when singing. In almost all drawings or paintings of singing birds one will find the elevated tongue shown clearly. The musical instrument of a bird is not its tongue, as almost every one knows; the sounds and modulations are produced in the throat and therefore why should the tongue be expected to show (except, perhaps, as a modulator).

To cut the tongue out of a picture of a singing bird detracts from it and looks exceedingly strange, solely because we are used to seeing it so in likenesses, but not in life—but the portrait nevertheless becomes true to nature.—REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR., *Longwood, Mass.*

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Citizen Bird.**<sup>2</sup>—'Citizen Bird' is a unique contribution to the literature of Ornithology. It addresses an audience which ornithologists had previously neglected and does it in so attractive a manner that the reader's attention is held from cover to cover. With perhaps no desire

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<sup>1</sup> I had no opportunity of observing Thrushes, except the Robin.

<sup>2</sup> Citizen Bird | Scenes from Bird-Life in Plain | English for Beginners | By Mabel Osgood Wright | And | Elliott Coues | With one hundred and eleven Illustrations | By Louis Agassiz Fuertes | New York | The Macmillan Company | London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. | 1897 | All rights reserved | 12mo. pp. xiv + 430. Engraved half-tones in text, 111. (Price, \$1.50.)

for a knowledge of birds he is deluded into reading a story where the human element commands his interest, and if while reading he does not soon learn to care for birds for their own sake, it is because his nature is abnormally unsympathetic.

The plan of the book will explain how well adapted it is to achieve this end. 'Dr. Roy Hunter' with his daughter, nephew and niece, a country boy and two or three others, are passing the summer at 'Orchard Farm,' and the book is made up of a series of field and study talks in which the children are eager questioners and often keen observers, while the Doctor is ever present to explain in an always interesting manner the significance of the scenes from bird-life by which they are surrounded. The children themselves are so bright, the Doctor so responsive, that other children reading this record of a summer with the birds will not only become attached to its human characters, but to its feathered ones as well, and at the same time will unconsciously absorb an extensive and correct knowledge of ornithology.

The text is made more real by Mr. Fuertes's beautiful drawings, and their charm in turn is increased by the text, which makes us regard them as we would the portraits of the leading characters in a fascinating story. It is evident, therefore, that both authors and illustrator have made not only an important contribution to literature and art, but that they have rendered an invaluable service to science in so sharpening the entering wedge of bird-lore, that it may now find openings which before were closed to it. — F. M. C.

**Birds of Maine.**<sup>1</sup>—Mr. Knight and his *confrères* deserve the thanks of all ornithologists for rendering accessible so large an amount of information concerning the birds of Maine. The list proper enumerates 316 species and subspecies as known to occur in the State. After each species an outline of its general status as a Maine bird is given, and this is followed by a brief statement of its manner of occurrence in each county, based on the notes of many observers whose names are placed in parentheses after the remarks for which they are responsible. To this list, occupying pp. 13-132, are appended sections on 'Introduced Species,' the Domestic Pigeon and House Sparrow being here included; a 'Hypothetical List,' giving 27 species, and a 'Summary' in which an analysis of the avifauna of the State is presented. There is also a brief but well considered essay on 'Faunal Areas' with special reference to the distribution of life in Maine, while a Bibliography and an Index complete an excellent piece of work. — F. M. C.

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<sup>1</sup> Bulletin No. 3. | The University of Maine | Department of Natural History. | A List of the | Birds of Maine | Showing their Distribution by Counties and their Status in each County. | Prepared under the auspices of the United Ornithologists of Maine | By Ora W. Knight, B. S., | Assistant in Natural History. | Augusta | Kennebec Journal Print | 1897.— 8vo. pp. 184.